

BOSTON AREA

In February, **Luigi Salbi**, chef/owner of **Mediterranean Bistro**, opened **Felucca**, at 1032 Beacon Street in Brookline. Named for the sailing ships of the ancient Carthaginians, the airy 170-seater, with white-washed walls and an arched ceiling, evokes a fishing village. The menu offers North African-influenced Mediterranean dishes such as *ajajine* of chicken with preserved lemons, raisins, and saffron, and braised lamb shank with roasted garlic/wild mushroom flan and white bean/Swiss chard stew. Appetizers range from \$5 to \$10; entrées from \$13 to \$20.

NEW YORK CITY

Last month, veteran restaurateur **Ken Aretsky** (Arcadia) opened **Butterfield 81**, at 170 East 81st Street, the former site of *Pinochio*. Focal points of the bistro, which seats 70, are a wood-burning grill and an open kitchen. It's a family enterprise, with son **Jon** as bartender, son-in-law **Daniele Serra** as manager, and daughter **Beth** as co-chef with **John Karagalis**, formerly of *Granary Tavern*. Appetizers (\$6 to \$12) range from grilled wild mushroom risotto to wood-grilled foie gras with applesauce, brioche toasts, and *mâche*. Entrées (\$15 to \$25) include wood-grilled lobster hash and grilled rib-eye steak with charred sweet onions and crisp garlic potatoes.

Russian Firebird Restaurant is set to open on Theater Row this month, at 365-67 West 46th Street. Owners **J. William Holt** and his Russian baroness wife, **Irina Von der Lammiz**, are renovating two town houses to recreate a prerevolutionary St. Petersburg mansion of the Romanov Imperial period. Eight elegantly decorated rooms will seat 220. **Craig Rodenhiser** will prepare authentic Russian dishes such as *borscht*, baked mushrooms in sour cream, and poached sturgeon in tart cherry sauce. Main courses range from \$18 to \$30.

A bakery by day, restaurant magnate **Drew Nieporeet's TriBakery**, at 186 Franklin Street, now transforms itself into a trattoria, **Zeppole** at the **TriBakery**, at night. Executive chef **Frank Crispo**, formerly of the *Chefs Cuisiniers Club* (now *Alva*), aims for straightforward, full-

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

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flavored dishes as found in Little Italy in the past. Appetizers (\$5 to \$8) include a mozzarella sandwich with anchovy sauce, and stuffed artichokes and peppers. Entrées (\$12 to \$17) range from piccata of filet mignon with lemon and herbs to sweetbread with artichokes and capers.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Anglophiles should relish the \$2 million **Churchill's Pub & Restaurant**, which opens this month in Cooper City outside Fort Lauderdale. Owner **Victoria Williamson** pays homage to Sir Winston himself with a life-size original painting that hangs in the private dining room, where patrons can indulge in cigars and brandy. Executive chef **John Heenie** serves traditional British pub fare in tandem with modern American and Caribbean dishes. Appetizers (\$5 to \$10) include jumbo sea scallops with lime/mango salsa, and buffalo carpaccio. Entrées (\$10 to \$25) range from roasted pork tenderloin stuffed with fresh figs and Anjou pears to jerk-seasoned yellowfin tuna with fried plantains and a purée of bell peppers.

LOS ANGELES

Chez Mélangé impresarios **Michael Franks** and **Robert Bell**, with partner/executive chef **Michael Shafer**, have taken over the restaurant in the **Beverly Prescott Hotel** (Beverly Hills) that was formerly *Rox*, then *Sylvie*. They opened **The Chez**, their seventh restaurant, in March. Chef **Chris Blobaum**, most recently of *Sylvie*, produces California cuisine with regional American, Pacific Rim, and Mediterranean touches. Appetizers (\$4 to \$9) include Dungeness crab/shrimp cake with cucumber/*poisson* relish and crispy calamari with charred tomato salsa. Main courses (\$12 to \$25) range from Cajun meat loaf served with garlic mashed potatoes and *marchands de vin* sauce to wasabi-pointed swordfish with weak-charred vegetables.

Yujean Kang opened his second eponymous restaurant in March at 8826 Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood. Designers **Danna Hu** and **Jaynelle Ip** have introduced antique Chinese screens and jade pieces within a modern setting. The menu lists many dishes similar to Kang's Pasadena restaurant. Appetizers (\$5 to \$10) include a Julietine of Chilean sea bass with kumquats and passion fruit sauce, and crispy poussin with ginger and scallions. Main courses (\$13 to \$18) range from tea-smoked duck with pancakes, scallions, and plum sauce to sautéed fish of the day with honey mustard/curry sauce, topped with crispy Parma prosciutto and sugar pea sprouts.

ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA

With five restaurants in the Los Angeles area already to his credit, **Joachim Splichal** and his wife and partner, **Christine**, open **Pinot Blanc** this month, at 641 Main Street. A large patio and spacious grounds with olive trees, an herb garden, and an outdoor fireplace create the pastoral feel of a country inn. The 168-seat restaurant also has three private wine-tasting rooms. Executive chef **David Daniels**, previously of the *Ventana Inn* in Big Sur and *Aqua* in San Francisco, serves country bistro fare. Appetizers (\$6 to \$9) include a caramelized onion tart and herring salad with a potato pancake and winter mixed greens. Entrées (\$15 to \$20) range from calves' liver with roasted fingerling potatoes to duck leg confit with wilted frites.

In March, **Michael Chiarello** and his Tra Vigne cohorts, chef **Michael Gyetvan** and general manager **Kevin Cronin**, opened an outpost called **Tomatina**, within the tree-lined courtyard of the new 21-room **Inn at Southbridge**, operated by **Meadowood**. Like Tra Vigne, **Tomatina** belongs to the **Real Restaurant Group** (Fog City Diner, *Mustard's Grill*, etc.) developed by general partners **Bill Higgins** and **Bill Upson**. **Tomatina** is a family-oriented restaurant that seats 120. **Jim Humbert**, who was sous chef at Tra Vigne, rides the range. The open kitchen boasts a 12' by 12' wood-burning brick oven. A simple Mediterranean menu features pizzas, pastas, antipasto, and salads. Entrées range from \$8 to \$12. ■

